



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOORROOPILLY

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MINISTER FOR FAMILIES, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CARE

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.58 p.m.): Today the public witnessed for the first time since 1994 some hundreds of Department of Families, Youth and Community Care staff taking industrial action in protest at the lack of funding and resources for child protection in Queensland. That demonstration occurred outside these precincts, in George Street. However, today was about more than simply a lack of funding and resources; it was about the continuing broken promises of this Government.

This Government made a range of promises whilst in Opposition. I recollect that, on a number of occasions, the Minister tried to stir up industrial action. It is marvellous how these things come around. It came around today. Actions speak louder than words. The Minister is looking more and more like a mime artist every day when it comes to this Government's delivery of election promises.

Since coming into office the Minister has failed her department and the people of Queensland. She has failed to deliver on a range of election commitments and promises, particularly the one about adequately resourcing the department. It is easy to make commitments and promises and to put legislation through this House, but as the Minister and the Government are finding out in a range of areas—and I will not go into the others—it requires funding and resources to deliver on the rhetoric, and that is not happening, particularly in relation to the child protection legislation.

This week alone the Minister has been caught out by departmental employees and by the victims of abuse in children's homes. We have also seen demonstrations from the victims of abuse at those institutions, which was raised during the Forde inquiry. But these are not the only people upset with the poor performance of the Minister and the Government. Every week members receive more and more complaints from people and organisations about the fact that they feel let down by the Government. The industrial action that has occurred today within the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is regrettable, because strike action does not solve anything. Of more concern is the fact that many needy Queenslanders will be left without the care and assistance that they desperately require. It is unfortunate that they did not have that help today because the staff of the department had to demonstrate on their account.

At the end of the day, the Minister has not been taking responsibility for her actions. As I said, it takes more than simple rhetoric. The Minister seems to expect the departmental officers to turn water into wine and to perform miracles with the limited resources available. This is not possible, and the demands placed on the department by the Minister's new child protection legislation—and this was raised when the legislation was passed through this Parliament—are such that to implement that legislation will require considerable additional resources. These resources have not been delivered as promised. Instead, what we have is more broken Beattie Labor Government promises.

To expect departmental officers to expose themselves to criminal charges because they do not have the resources to properly undertake their responsibilities is mean-spirited and wrong. However, that is what has been happening. The Minister does not seem to understand that delivering on rhetoric is completely different from playing politics, tarding up the media and dreaming of becoming Premier. The Department of Families, Youth and Community Care deals with people's lives and real emotions.

The Minister must start to realise this and start taking action to ensure that the department is properly resourced to help the people of Queensland and deliver the promises made by the Government.

Not only is there a problem in this area; today the Minister admitted that the trust fund has not been established for the victims of child abuse in institutions. In addition, the Government has failed to deliver on a number of commitments in relation to the report presented to and endorsed by this Parliament. The report covered a range of areas apart from counselling, such as the facilitation of educational opportunities, including literacy programs, advice regarding access to individual records, documents and archival papers, assistance to migrants for reunification with their families, and specialised counselling services for indigenous victims of abuse. It seems that the only promise that has been delivered concerns some limited counselling areas.

This is not good enough—far from it. In fact, promises are being made that run into tens of millions of dollars in many cases, but the funding is not forthcoming. That is what is happening in this case. We do not have the one-stop shop promised by the Minister—far from it.

Time expired.
